REVIEW ARTICLE

Intercultural Competence in Translation Education: A Systematic Literature Review

Xiaojing Cao[1] , Norhazlina Binti Husin[2*] , Norhaslinda Binti Hassan[3]

[1]Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, 40450 Selangor, Malaysia
Email: 2022812452@student.uitm.edu.my
[2]Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, 40450 Selangor, Malaysia
Email: norha462@uitm.edu.my
[3]Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, UiTM Penang Campus, 13500 Penang, Malaysia
Email: haslinda.hassan@uitm.edu.my

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR (*):
Norhazlina Binti Husin
(norha462@uitm.edu.my)

ABSTRACT

Translation education frequently emphasizes the importance of intercultural competence for successful translation practice. However, research specifically exploring intercultural competence within translation education contexts remains fragmented. This study examines the main research topics investigating intercultural competence in translation education, explores the predominant research methods used in existing studies, and identifies the gaps that remain in current research. Based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines, a systematic literature review was conducted, including 28 peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in Web of Science and Scopus, published up to 6 February 2025. The synthesis identifies two key research topics: (i) the importance of intercultural competence in translation education, and (ii) the development of intercultural competence in translation education. Existing studies employ a range of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, reflecting methodological diversity but also highlighting limitations. Significant gaps in the existing research include (i) gaps in theoretical frameworks and practical applications, and (ii) limitations in research methods. This review highlights the importance of addressing these gaps through further research, developing systematic models, conducting multilingual studies, and better integrating intercultural competence into translation education. This is vital to promote translation education and prepare culturally competent translators to meet global challenges.

Contribution/Originality: This study documents the current state of research on intercultural competence in translation education. It examines the primary topics explored, the methodologies commonly employed, and the gaps remaining in the literature, providing a comprehensive overview of the field.

1. Introduction

The era of globalization presents significant challenges for higher education, particularly in preparing students for increasingly diverse and interconnected communities (Barili & Byram, 2021). Translation plays a vital role in this context, serving not only as a means of communication but also as a gateway to cultural heritage (Bassnett & Johnston, 2019). As interactions between different cultures become more frequent, the need to integrate cultural understanding into translation processes becomes ever more critical (Vural, 2023).

In translation education, this requires students to develop more than just linguistic skills; they must also become intercultural mediators, capable of navigating cultural differences to facilitate effective communication (Bahumaid, 2010; Yarosh, 2014). Intercultural competence refers to the ability to interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds, embracing different worldviews and engaging meaningfully with various cultural perspectives (Barili & Byram, 2021). In a survey based on the European Master's in Translation (EMT) framework, professional translators consider this competence to be the core competence that translators must possess only after language competence and thematic competence (Esfandiari et al., 2019). It plays a crucial role in helping translators interpret and mediate cultural differences, while also influencing decision-making strategies and the effective use of electronic resources and internalized source-culture knowledge in the translation process (Olalla-Soler, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). However, intercultural competence has received limited research attention in translation education. This highlights the need for a systematic literature review on the studies of intercultural competence within translation education.

By examining and synthesizing studies from two major academic databases, Web of Science (WoS) core collection and Scopus, this systematic literature review aims to provide a broad perspective on the current research landscape. Following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, this review analyzes how intercultural competence is addressed in translation education through different research topics, approaches, and identified gaps. The guiding research questions are as follows:

   i.   What are the primary research topics concerning intercultural competence in translation education?
   ii. What approaches are predominantly employed in the existing studies?
   iii. What gaps remain in existing research?

By addressing these questions, this review aims to identify research patterns and gaps in the existing studies, providing valuable insights for both researchers and educational practitioners. The findings are intended to guide the improvement of translation education programs to ensure that students are better equipped to deal with intercultural challenges in diverse professional environments.

2. Method

This systematic literature review was conducted following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. The guidelines offer a structured framework for conducting transparent and rigorous systematic literature reviews. These guidelines were specifically designed to enhance reproducibility and comprehensiveness in literature reviews (Page et al., 2021). To provide a comprehensive overview of existing studies, two major academic databases,

WoS and Scopus, were selected as data sources due to their extensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals in the fields of education, linguistics, and translation studies.

The search strategy was developed using a comprehensive set of keywords designed to capture relevant studies. The search was conducted on February 6, 2025, and included the following terms combined with Boolean operators (AND, OR): ("intercultural competence" OR "cross-cultural competence" OR "cultural competence" OR "intercultural communicative competence" OR "multicultural competence") ("translator training" OR "translator trainee" OR "translator education" OR "translation education" OR "translation pedagogy").

For WoS, the search was limited to the Core Collection and focused on the Topic field, ensuring a focused retrieval of studies relating to the key concepts within their primary themes. In Scopus, the search was conducted within the Article Title, Abstract, and Keywords fields, capturing studies where the relevant terms appeared in prominent sections reflecting the main focus of the article.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were set to ensure relevance to the research questions. Only peer-reviewed articles in English that investigated intercultural competence in translation education were included. Studies that did not focus on this or were book series, chapters, reviews, and proceedings were excluded. In addition, only studies with full-text access were included (see Table 1 for detailed criteria).

Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

| Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Literature Type	Articles	Book series, book chapters, reviews, and proceedings
Language	English	Non-English
Access to Full-text	Full-text available	Full-text unavailable
Study Focus	Studies focused on intercultural competence	Studies not focused on intercultural competence
Fields	Studies in translation education settings	Studies not related to translation education

As shown in Figure 1, after applying the language and document type filters, a total of 37 records were retrieved: 14 from WoS and 23 from Scopus. After removing 9 duplicate records, 28 unique records were screened for relevance. Despite limiting the search to specific languages and document types, one record was identified that did not meet the inclusion criteria, which was a book chapter written by Nord (2023). This one was excluded, leaving 27 records considered relevant for further retrieval. All of these records could be retrieved, which meant there were 27 records for detailed eligibility assessment.

After reviewing the full text, the article written by Al-Melhi (2014) was excluded as it focuses on a pedagogical model for translation evaluation rather than investigating intercultural competence in translation education. As a result, 26 records were included for potential analysis from the database search.

Related author searching and citation tracking identified another five records. However, three of these could not be retrieved, leaving two records, both authored by Olalla-Soler (2018b, 2019), for eligibility assessment. These two records met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final pool of studies. In total, 28 studies were included in the review for further synthesis and analysis.

Figure 1: PRISMA Flowchart of Study Selection Process (Adapted from Page et al., 2021)
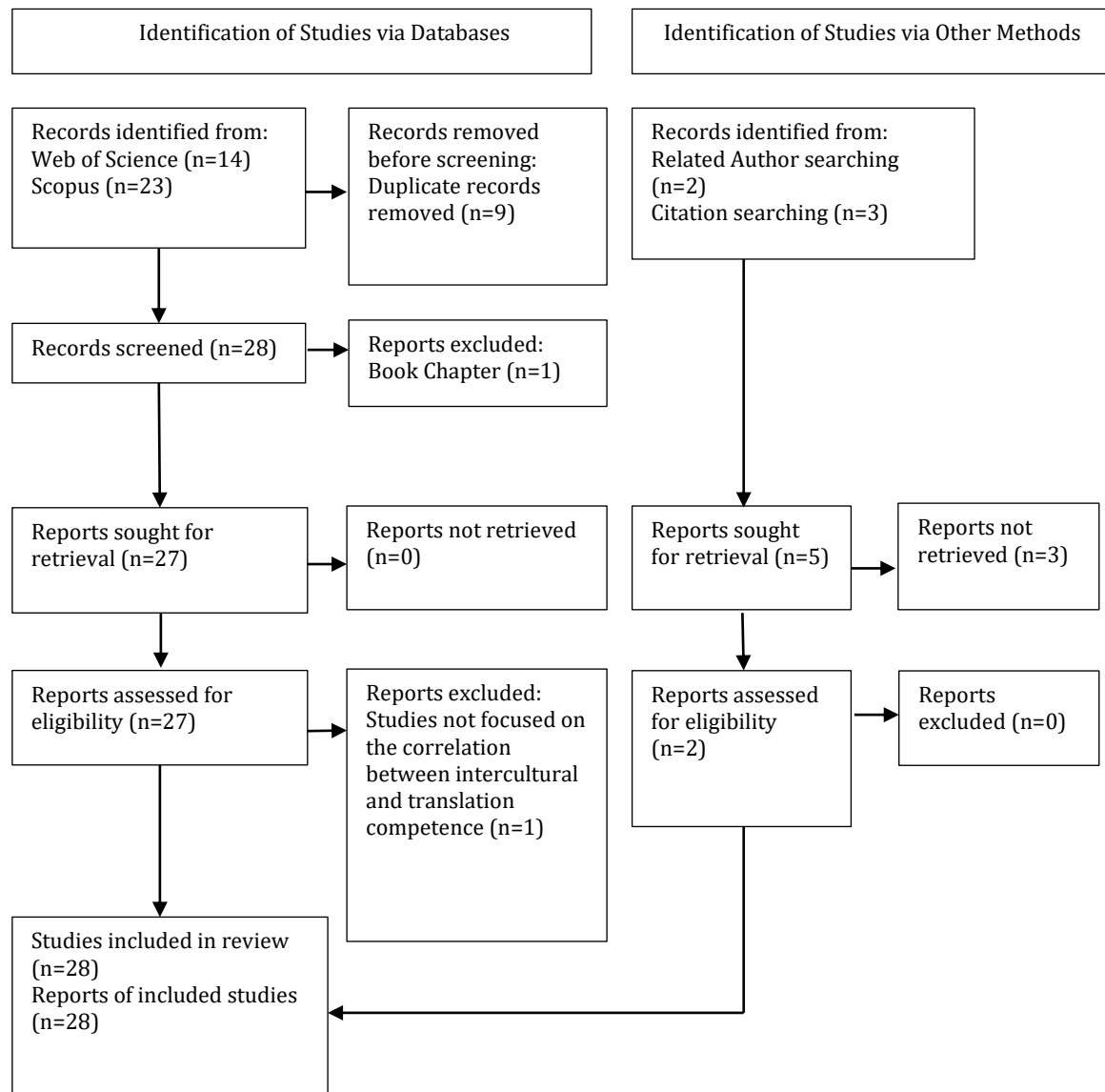
3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the key findings of the systematic literature review, with a focus on intercultural competence within the context of translation education. It examines the primary topics explored in the existing research, the methodologies commonly employed, and the gaps that remain in the existing literature.

3.1. Primary Research Topics Concerning Intercultural Competence in Translation Education

Existing studies reveal two main research topics: one focuses on the importance of intercultural competence in translation education, and the other on the development of intercultural competence in translation education. These topics are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Research Topics in Existing Studies

Author (Year)	Research Topic
Koskinen (2015)	Superdiversity and empathy in translation studies
Esfandiari et al. (2019)	Evaluation of the EMT framework's compatibility with professional translators' needs
Mirzoeva & Zhumabekova (2016)	Intercultural communication training for translators in multilingual environments
Bahumaid (2010)	Investigating the cultural competence of postgraduate students in English-Arabic translation programs, focusing on their ability to translate culture-bound terms and their awareness of translation procedures
Vula & Muhaxhiri (2024)	Exploring the challenges and strategies undergraduate students face when translating Albanian literary texts into English, focusing on linguistic and cultural barriers
Olalla-Soler (2018b)	Investigating the differences in adopting translation strategies to solve cultural translation problems in different levels of acquisition of the translator's cultural competence
Qassem (2021)	Investigating students' use of translation strategies and procedures in translating English cultural references into Arabic
Cai (2023)	Proposing strategies for developing intercultural communicative competence in English translation education
Tomozeiu et al. (2016)	Integration of intercultural competence into translator training curricula
Tomozeiu & Kumpulainen (2016)	Intercultural competence models in translator training and pedagogical contexts
Clouet & Massot (2024)	Examining the design and implementation of a telecollaborative course combining machine translation and intercultural communication to enhance translator training and intercultural competence
Omar & Salih (2023)	Exploring the impact of online transnational collaboration on developing translation students' intercultural competence and professional identities
Stankic & Begonja (2021)	Enhancing intercultural competence and teamwork in translation education through a collaborative, task-based approach
Kim & Koh (2017)	Exploring the effectiveness of tandem learning in translation classrooms
Solovyova et al. (2019)	Integrating competence-based and cultural approaches in translator training to enhance cultural competence in a multicultural environment
Golubkova et al. (2017)	Integrating culture-oriented English fiction texts to develop sociocultural competence in translator training

Ilynska et al. (2017)	Using LSP texts in translator training to develop thematic, linguistic, and cultural competences
Clouet (2024)	Using TV series to enhance language competence, intercultural competence, and translation skills in tourism translation training
Horbacauskiene & Bartaskevicius (2019)	Using audiovisual translation as a tool for developing intercultural competence in translator training
Angelone (2016)	Documentation and assessment of intercultural competence in translation using process-oriented methodologies
Albir & Olalla-Soler (2016)	Presenting different procedures (instruments and tasks) for assessing the acquisition of cultural competence in translator training

3.1.1. The Importance of Intercultural Competence in Translation Education

As the translation industry becomes increasingly globalized and diverse, intercultural competence is more important than ever, as translators must navigate a super-diverse environment and adapt to various cultural norms. In order to prepare students for the complexities of translating across cultures, translation education programs should prioritize intercultural competence, given the growing importance of cultural understanding (Koskinen, 2015). A study on the compatibility of the EMT framework with the needs of professional translators showed that the integration of intercultural competence into translator training can help bridge the gap between linguistic skills and the practical needs of the translation market (Esfandiari et al., 2019).

Intercultural competence is directly related to the quality of translation products, as it equips students with skills to manage cultural differences, which are essential for producing accurate, culturally sensitive translations (Mirzoeva & Zhumabekova, 2016). Research has shown that students with insufficient cultural knowledge often make errors such as misinterpretation, under-translation, and omission, especially when translating culture-bound terms (Bahumaid, 2010). In addition, students need to move beyond literal translation, as over-reliance on this approach can lead to implicit, modified, and complete cultural losses, especially when translating cultural terms, and idiomatic expressions and dealing with grammatical differences (Vula & Muhaxhiri, 2024). This emphasizes the importance of integrating intercultural competence into translation education programs to ensure that students develop a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures.

Intercultural competence also plays a crucial role in the translation process, especially in the application of translation strategies. Studies have shown that professional translators and translation students adopt different strategies when dealing with cultural translation problems. While professional translators employ internal support strategies, relying on their internalized cultural knowledge, students often resort to external support, such as dictionaries and online resources. The study showed that internal support strategies led to more accurate translations, while students' reliance on external resources led to less effective translations (Olalla-Soler, 2018b). Similarly, a study on students' translation of cultural references from English to Arabic found that students seldom use effective translation strategies and procedures, leading to translations that fail to fully capture the original meaning and intent (Qassem, 2021). In conclusion, intercultural competence is a critical factor in translation practice, influencing not only the choice of strategies but also the quality of the final translation.

3.1.2. The Development of Intercultural Competence in Translation Education

Recognizing the importance of intercultural competence in translation, researchers have emphasized that this competence should be explicitly incorporated into translator training curricula with a clear and well-defined conceptual framework to help students effectively navigate cultural differences when communicating meaning across languages (Cai, 2023; Tomozeiu et al., 2016). Building on this perspective, scholars have conducted a comparative analysis of the intercultural competence models proposed by the Promoting Intercultural Competence in Translators (PICT) project and Yarosh (2014) highlighting how these frameworks complement each other in operationalizing intercultural competence for translator training, and emphasizing the necessity of a comprehensive approach to addressing cultural dimensions in the pedagogical context (Tomozeiu & Kumpulainen, 2016).

Scholars have explored ways of developing intercultural competence in translation education. They have looked at teaching methods, materials, and assessment instruments. In terms of methods, collaborative translation is recognized as an effective method, particularly in the context of cross-cultural communication and remote collaboration (Clouet & Massot, 2024; Omar & Salih, 2023; Stankic & Begonja, 2021). Through this collaborative approach, students connect with peers from different cultural backgrounds, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of cultural differences and enhancing their intercultural competence. This cooperation not only enhances students' teamwork abilities but also fosters cultural sensitivity, boosting their professional competitiveness (Clouet & Massot, 2024; Omar & Salih, 2023; Stankic & Begonja, 2021). Similarly, tandem learning promotes intercultural communication by bringing together students from different cultural backgrounds. In tandem classrooms, students work together as co-translators with native speakers of both the source and target languages, thereby improving their understanding of linguistic and cultural differences and enhancing their intercultural competence (Kim & Koh, 2017). In addition, the competence-based and cultural approaches, which aim to enhance students' ability to communicate effectively in multicultural environments, are also effective methods for cultivating intercultural competence (Solovyova et al., 2019).

Complementing these methods, the selection of appropriate teaching materials is also important for enhancing students' intercultural awareness and sociopragmatic competence. Effective materials identified in existing studies include culture-oriented English language fictional texts (Golubkova et al., 2017), LSP (language for special purposes) texts (Ilynska et al., 2017) and audiovisual translation resources (Clouet, 2024; Horbacauskiene & Bartaskevicius, 2019). These materials provide rich cultural backgrounds and various linguistic settings, allowing students to engage deeply with cultural differences and apply their intercultural competence in practical translation tasks.

Models for documenting and assessing intercultural competence have also been proposed. One model offers a process-oriented dual methodology using screen recordings and think-aloud protocols to record and analyze problem-solving in cultural translation (Angelone, 2016). Another model advocates a dynamic, multi-dimensional assessment method, using different tools to assess both the acquisition of cultural knowledge and the application of cultural references in translation tasks (Albir & Olalla-Soler, 2016).

3.2. Predominant Research Methods in Existing Studies

The research methods employed in the existing studies concerning intercultural competence in translation education show a relatively balanced distribution in three main approaches: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. As shown in Table 3, in the 28 studies reviewed, 10 studies used qualitative methods, eight adopted quantitative methods, and 10 employed mixed methods.

Table 3: Research Methods in Existing Studies

Author (Year)	Method/Tools	
Albir & Olalla-Soler (2016)	Qualitative method	Theoretical study
Koskinen (2015)	Qualitative method	Theoretical study
Tomozeiu et al. (2016)	Qualitative method	Theoretical study
Tomozeiu & Kumpulainen (2016)	Qualitative method	Theoretical study
Solovyova et al. (2019)	Qualitative method	Theoretical study
Cranmer (2019)	Qualitative method	Case study
Ilynska et al. (2017)	Qualitative method	Case study
Balogh (2019)	Qualitative method	Case study
Clouet & Massot (2024)	Qualitative method	Action research; Translation task; Questionnaire; Interview
Vula & Muhaxhiri (2024)	Qualitative method	Comparative analysis; Translation text; Questionnaire
Olalla-Soler (2018a)	Quantitative method	Quasi-experimental study; Translation text; Screen recordings
Olalla-Soler (2018b)	Quantitative method	Quasi-experimental study; Translation text; Screen recordings
Olalla-Soler (2019)	Quantitative method	Quasi-experimental study; Translation text; Questionnaire; Template; Screen recordings
Olalla-Soler (2015)	Quantitative method	Experimental study; Translation text; Questionnaire; Scale; Document; Screen recordings
Mirzoeva & Zhumabekova (2016)	Quantitative method	Experimental study; Questionnaire; Reflections
Kim & Koh (2017)	Quantitative method	Comparative analysis; Questionnaire
Esfandiari et al. (2019)	Quantitative method	Descriptive-survey approach; Questionnaire
Qassem & Al Thowaini (2023)	Quantitative method	Process-oriented method; Translog-II; Questionnaire
Angelone (2016)	Mixed method	Screen recordings; Think-aloud protocols
Qassem (2021)	Mixed method	Translation task; Questionnaire
Bahumaid (2010)	Mixed method	Translation test
Stankic & Begonja (2021)	Mixed method	Observation; Questionnaire; Translation product
Castagnoli (2016)	Mixed method	Corpus-based study
Omar & Salih (2023)	Mixed method	Action research; Translation tasks and reflections
Clouet (2024)	Mixed method	Action research; Task-based activities; Questionnaire
Horbacauskiene & Bartaskevicius (2019)	Mixed method	Comparative analysis

Golubkova et al. (2017)	Mixed method	Experimental study; Questionnaire surveys; Group and individual discussions; Observational methods, etc.
Cai (2023)	Mixed method	Not explicitly mentioned

3.2.1. Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research methods have been used in the study of intercultural competence in translation education, including theoretical studies, case studies, and other approaches. Theoretical studies typically involve the design of models that define intercultural competence and break it down into manageable components for better understanding and assessment. For example, such methods have been employed by scholars to design cultural competence assessment procedures, using tools such as translation reports and cultural reference catalogs to assess how students deal with cultural issues in translation tasks (Albir & Olalla-Soler, 2016). They have also been used to explore the affective nature of translation, emphasizing the role of empathy (Koskinen, 2015), to operationalize intercultural competence through pedagogical frameworks (Tomozeiu et al., 2016; Tomozeiu & Kumpulainen, 2016), and to design an educational model for developing the cultural competence of translation students (Solovyova et al., 2019).

Case studies are commonly used to investigate intercultural competence in specific translation contexts. For instance, case studies have been employed to examine cross-cultural challenges in tourism translation (Cranmer, 2019), the use of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) texts in translation training programs (Ilynska et al., 2017), and the design of a framework for legal translator training (Balogh, 2019).

In addition, action research and comparative analysis have also been employed. Action research involves students in activities like telecollaboration, using reflective questionnaires and interviews to collect qualitative data on students' experiences with machine translation and post-editing tasks. The feedback has been used to refine the acquisition of translation strategies and improve intercultural competence (Clouet & Massot, 2024). Comparative analysis has been adopted to examine the strategies that undergraduate students use in translating Albanian literary texts into English, identifying linguistic and cultural barriers through translation analysis and student feedback (Vula & Muhaxhiri, 2024).

3.2.2. Quantitative Research Methods

Quantitative methods have also been employed in existing studies, with an emphasis on empirical data collection and statistical analysis.

Quasi-experimental designs have been used in several studies. These studies compare differences between students and translators in the use of cultural competence to solve cultural translation problems, focusing on the use of electronic resources (Olalla-Soler, 2018a), translation strategies (Olalla-Soler, 2018b), and internalized source culture knowledge (Olalla-Soler, 2019). All three studies employed translated texts and screen recordings as data collection instruments. In the study on internalized knowledge of the source culture, a questionnaire on cultural knowledge and a template containing three tasks were also adopted (Olalla-Soler, 2019). These process-oriented designs allowed for the tracking of participants' translation behaviors and provided insight into how

cultural competence develops and influences the approaches used by students and professionals when dealing with cultural translation challenges.

Experimental research designs were also adopted in two studies. One of them focused on the cultural competence of translators and its acquisition, using different tools such as translation texts, questionnaires, scales, and screen recording software to observe how students identify and deal with cultural translation challenges (Olalla-Soler, 2015). The other study investigated a course aimed at developing intercultural competence in the context of multilingual education in Kazakhstan. The research was conducted in three stages: a pre-experimental analysis including a survey of instructors' opinions; a one-year experimental course; and the production of an electronic manual with video materials for training (Mirzoeva & Zhumabekova, 2016).

Questionnaire surveys have also been employed in two studies. The first study adopted a comparative research design to examine the effectiveness of traditional translation classrooms in comparison to tandem translation classrooms, focusing on students' perceptions of their learning experiences (Kim & Koh, 2017). The second study employed a descriptive survey approach, analyzing responses from professional translators to examine the compatibility of the EMT competence framework with actual translation requirements, with the aim of bridging the gap between academic training and industry expectations (Esfandiari et al., 2019).

In addition, process-oriented methods using Translog software and a post-questionnaire were used to track cognitive processes in translation tasks (Qassem & Al Thowaini, 2023).

3.2.3. Mixed Research Methods

Mixed research methods have been employed in a total of 10 studies. This method combines both qualitative and quantitative procedures, allowing researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex phenomena related to intercultural competence in translation education.

Process-oriented studies focus on the understanding of translators' cognitive and behavioral patterns during the translation process. For example, one study involved a process-oriented approach using screen recordings and think-aloud protocols to observe and document students' decision-making and problem-solving processes in translation tasks, reflecting their intercultural communicative competence (Angelone, 2016).

Product-oriented methods often combine translation tasks and questionnaires to assess students' intercultural competence. For example, one study adopted this method to investigate the strategies and procedures used by students in translating culturally specific expressions, with the questionnaire used to gather data on the strategies employed and the translation task providing insights into students' actual translation decisions and solutions to culture-specific challenges (Qassem, 2021). Similarly, another study used a translation task involving culture-bound terms, and the results were analyzed quantitatively to measure students' performance and qualitatively through error analysis to examine the translation strategies employed by students in their translations (Bahumaid, 2010). Additionally, observation, questionnaires, and analysis of final products were combined to assess the effectiveness of collaborative task-based

learning (Stankic & Begonja, 2021), while corpus-based methods were employed to explore the contrastive pragmalinguistic competence of trainee translators (Castagnoli, 2016).

Studies that integrate process- and product-oriented approaches provide a comprehensive view by combining both the analysis of translation processes and the evaluation of final products. In an action research study, data were collected from the students' translation tasks and reflections before, during, and after the telecollaboration to examine the changes in students' intercultural competence (Omar & Salih, 2023). Another action research study involved task-based activities and audiovisual materials (e.g., TV series), with a questionnaire administered to assess students' perceptions of how these activities enhanced their translation strategies and cultural understanding (Clouet, 2024). In addition to these two action research studies, a comparative analysis method was adopted to evaluate how students identified and analyzed spoken language elements in audiovisual translation, comparing the translation strategies used in subtitled and dubbed versions (Horbacauskiene & Bartaskevicius, 2019).

In addition, some studies have adopted mixed methods to explore ways to integrate cultural training into translation curricula. For example, culture-oriented experiments using various instruments such as questionnaires, observation, and discussion have been used to build sociocultural competence through fictional texts (Golubkova et al., 2017). Another study employed qualitative analysis to explore the impact of cultural differences on translation teaching, combined with quantitative data to illustrate the effectiveness of strategies to cultivate intercultural communicative competence (Cai, 2023).

3.3. Key Gaps in Existing Research

Key gaps in research on intercultural competence in translation education are highlighted in the systematic review of existing studies. As summarized in Table 4, these gaps primarily relate to the integration of theoretical frameworks with practical applications, as well as methodological limitations in existing research.

Table 4: Key Gaps in Existing Studies

Author (Year)	Research Gaps	Sample Size	Language Pair
Albir & Olalla-Soler (2016)	Lack of empirical validation of the proposed model and instruments	–	–
Angelone (2016)	Lack of large-scale empirical research; Lack of a process-oriented translation practice course	2 students	German-English
Olalla-Soler (2018a)	Small sample size and limited generalizability; Focus on a single language pair; Lack of validation in different pedagogical contexts; lack of control group	38 students; 10 translators	German-Spanish
Olalla-Soler (2018b)	Small sample size and limited generalizability; Focus on a single language pair; Lack of validation in different pedagogical contexts; Lack of control group	38 students; 10 translators	German-Spanish
Olalla-Soler (2019)	Small sample size and limited generalizability; Focus on a single	38 students; 10	German-Spanish

	language pair; Lack of validation in different pedagogical contexts; Lack of control group	translators	
Koskinen (2015)	Limitations of traditional translation studies in super-diverse contexts; Lack of critical reflection on cultural concepts in translator training and research	–	–
Tomozeiu & Kumpulainen (2016)	Lack of specification and operationalization of intercultural competence in translation competence models; Ambiguity and implicitness of intercultural competence in translation competence models	–	–
Tomozeiu et al. (2016)	Lack of studies on intercultural competence acquisition in translation education; Lack of clear definition of intercultural competence for translators; Lack of explicit intercultural competence training	–	–
Qassem (2021)	Lack of clear and efficient teaching method; Lack of systematic training in translation strategies	40 students	English-Arabic
Clouet & Massot (2024)	Lack of training integrating digital tools with intercultural competence; Limited research on machine translation and intercultural communication synergy	16 students	English-German English-French English-Spanish
Omar & Salih (2023)	Limited research on digital spaces in translation teaching	28 students	English-Arabic
Stankic & Begonja (2021)	Lack of practical implementation and assessment of intercultural competence in translation education at the tertiary level	64 students	German to Croatian Croatian to English
Golubkova et al. (2017)	Lack of cultural integration in translator training curricula; Lack of efficient methodology for managing sociocultural competence development	430 students 15 instructors 40 teachers 20 native English speakers	–
Esfandiari et al. (2019)	Single data source (professional translators only); Lack of diverse data collection methods	456 translators	–
Ilynska et al. (2017)	Small sample size	14 students	English– Latvian, Russian, and French
Qassem & Al Thowaini (2023)	Small sample size and limited generalizability	16 students	English-Arabic Ababic-English
Bahumaid (2010)	Small sample size and limited generalizability; Lack of a compulsory course on culture in translation	10 students	English-Arabic
Olalla-Soler (2015)	Lack of empirical and experimental studies on cultural competence and its acquisition in translator training	10 students; 10 translators	German-Spanish
Kim & Koh (2017)	Small sample size; Lack of assessment	29 students	–

of students' translation performance;
Limited to
undergraduate translation modules;
Lack of qualitative research

3.3.1. Gaps in Theoretical Frameworks and Practical Applications

Despite the growing attention paid to intercultural competence in translator training, there are still noticeable research gaps.

Firstly, there is insufficient empirical validation of existing models. While various models and assessment instruments have been proposed, few have been tested rigorously empirically to confirm their effectiveness in different educational and cultural contexts (Albir & Olalla-Soler, 2016; Angelone, 2016; Olalla-Soler, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). This lack of solid empirical evidence limits the generalizability of the findings and hinders the development of translation education practice.

Secondly, there is a lack of an explicit operationalization of intercultural competence, which limits its effective integration into translator training frameworks. Intercultural competence is frequently defined vaguely and inconsistently, with the distinctions between its core constructs and their pedagogical implications remaining poorly articulated, thereby complicating its integration into translator training frameworks (Koskinen, 2015; Tomozeiu & Kumpulainen, 2016). In order to address this issue, intercultural competence needs to be explicitly included in translator training, with structured curricula and clear learning objectives (Tomozeiu et al., 2016; Tomozeiu & Kumpulainen, 2016). In addition, there is also a lack of clear and effective teaching methods and systematic training in translation strategies, which further hinders the development of intercultural competence (Qassem, 2021).

Finally, traditional models often fail to account for the evolving nature of intercultural competence in the contemporary super-diverse environment. Koskinen (2015) notes that super-diversity - the increased cultural and linguistic hybridity - complicates translation by emphasizing its affective dimension, challenging the static models of traditional translation studies. In this context, Clouet and Massot (2024) highlight the lack of a systematic training module that integrates digital tools with intercultural competence development. Furthermore, the limited research on the role of digital spaces in translation education highlights the need to explore how online transnational collaboration in translator training can enhance intercultural competence effectively (Omar & Salih, 2023).

3.3.2. Limitations in Research Methods

Several gaps in research methods limit the generalizability and depth of existing studies. First, many of the studies are limited by small sample sizes. As shown in Table 4, there are only two studies that involve sample sizes of more than 400 participants (Golubkova et al., 2017; Esfandiari et al., 2019). In comparison, a significant number of studies report small sample sizes, such as Ilynska et al. (2017) with 14 students, Qassem & Al Thowaini (2023) with 16 students, and Bahumaid (2010) with just 10 students. These small sample sizes reduce the strength of the studies and limit the extent to which the results can be applied to larger populations.

Second, the applicability of their findings is further limited by the fact that many studies focus on a narrow range of language pairs and translation directions. The majority of studies focus primarily on a few language pairs, such as German-English (Olalla-Soler, 2015, 2018a, 2018b, 2019; Angelone, 2016) and English-Arabic (Kim & Koh, 2017; Qassem, 2021; Omar & Salih, 2023; Bahumaid, 2010). Most of these language pairs have been studied in one direction of translation, typically from the foreign language (L2) to the native language (L1), which does not take into account the complexity of translation from L1 to L2. While some studies, such as Vula and Muhaxhiri (2024) and Qassem & Al Thowaini (2023), examine translation in the reverse direction (L1 to L2), this remains a minority perspective. The narrow range of language pairs and translation directions in these studies also limits the ability to generalize findings to other linguistic and cultural contexts.

In addition, there is the issue of limitations in data collection methods, such as over-reliance on a single data source (Esfandiari et al., 2019) or a single quantitative analysis (Kim & Koh, 2017), which limits the depth of findings.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This review of 28 studies provides a comprehensive overview of existing research on intercultural competence in translation education. The review highlights the growing recognition of intercultural competence as a critical component of translation education, with studies emphasizing its importance in improving translation quality, identifying effective translation strategies, and preparing students to handle complex cultural contexts in a globalized environment.

It is noteworthy that this systematic review shows that although various theoretical frameworks have been proposed to conceptualize intercultural competence, there is a lack of empirical validation across different pedagogical and cultural contexts. Furthermore, the operationalization of intercultural competence remains vague, with insufficient integration into translation education curricula and a lack of clear, systematic teaching methods and strategies. Also, the evolving nature of intercultural competence, particularly in the context of super-diverse societies and digital environments, emphasizes the need for new models that incorporate technical tools and promote intercultural competence.

In terms of research methods, the review reveals considerable limitations, such as small sample sizes, a narrow focus on specific language pairs, and translation directions. These methodological limitations affect the generalizability of the findings and hinder the development of evidence-based practice in translation education.

To move forward, future research should give priority to the development of systematic models that integrate intercultural competence into translation education, alongside large-scale multilingual and multicultural studies to strengthen the evidence base. In addition, technological advances should be explored for their potential to enhance the development of intercultural competence in translation education. Addressing these gaps will contribute to the development of more comprehensive translation education programs that effectively equip students with the intercultural competence necessary to meet the demands of an increasingly globalized world.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

Not applicable

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare there are no conflicts of interest.

References

Albir, A. H., & Olalla-Soler, C. (2016). Procedures for assessing the acquisition of cultural competence in translator training. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, *10*(3), 318–342. https://doi.org/10.1080/1750399X.2016.1236561

Al-Melhi, A. (2014). Pedagogical implications of utilizing translation evaluation strategies with translation students: Toward a model of teaching translation. *Arab World English Journal*, *Special Issue on Translation No. 3*, 11–26. Retrieved from http://www.awej.org/

Angelone, E. (2016). A process-oriented approach for documenting and gauging intercultural competence in translation. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, *10*(3), 304–317. https://doi.org/10.1080/1750399X.2016.1236560

Bahumaid, S. (2010). Investigating cultural competence in English-Arabic translator training programs. *Meta*, 55(3), 569–588. https://doi.org/10.7202/045078ar

Balogh, D. (2019). The role of genres and text selection in legal translator training. *Studies in Logic, Grammar and Rhetoric*, *58*(1), 17–34. https://doi.org/10.2478/slgr-2019-0015

Barili, A., & Byram, M. (2021). Teaching intercultural citizenship through intercultural service learning in world language education. *Foreign Language Annals*, *54*(3), 776-799. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12526

Bassnett, S., & Johnston, D. (2019). The outward turn in translation studies. *The Translator*, *25*(3), 181-188. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2019.1701228

Cai, J. (2023). Cultural differences in college English translation teaching and strategies for cultivating intercultural communicative competence. *Archives of Clinical Psychiatry*, *50*(2), 228–235. https://doi.org/10.15761/0101-60830000000577

Castagnoli, S. (2016). Investigating trainee translators' contrastive pragmalinguistic competence: A corpus-based analysis of interclausal linkage in learner translations. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, *10*(3), 343–363. https://doi.org/10.1080/1750399X.2016.1236562

Clouet, R. (2024). Training translators for the tourism industry in the L2/LSP classroom through TV Series: Fostering activities to develop ICC. *Hikma*, *23*(Número especial I), 1-33. https://doi.org/10.21071/hikma.v23i3.16980

Clouet, R., & Massot, N. (2024). Designing and implementing an online seminar in telecollaboration. Machine translation and intercultural communication (MTIC). *SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpretation*, *17*(2), 29–50. https://doi.org/10.33542/JTI2024-2-3

Cranmer, R. (2019). The inclusion of international tourists: Developing the translator-client relationship. *Altre Modernità*, *21*, 55-68. https://doi.org/10.13130/2035-7680/11632

Esfandiari, M. R., Shokrpour, N., & Rahimi, F. (2019). An evaluation of the EMT: Compatibility with the professional translator's needs. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, *6*(1), 1601055. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2019.1601055

Golubkova, O. N., Masalimova, A. R., & Bírovä, J. (2017). The development of sociocultural competence in future translators via the methodology of culture-oriented interpretation of English language fictional texts. *Man In India*, *97*(14), 73-83.

Horbacauskiene, J., & Bartaskevicius, G. (2019). Audiovisual translation as means for intercultural competence development in translator training. *Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*, *7*(1), 95-104. https://doi.org/10.22190/JTESAP1901095H

Ilynska, L., Smirnova, T., & Platonova, M. (2017). Application of LSP texts in translator training. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, *7*(2), 275–293. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2017.7.2.6

Kim, D., & Koh, T. (2017). Tandem translation classroom: A case study. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *39*(2), 97–110. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2017.1315948

Koskinen, K. (2015). Training translators for a superdiverse world. Translators' intercultural competence and translation as affective work. *Russian Journal of Linguistics*, *19*(4), 175–184. Retrieved from https://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics/article/view/9266

Mirzoeva, L. Y., & Zhumabekova, A. K. (2016). Inter-cultural professional competence as a key aspect of translators training. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, (Special Issue for INTE 2016), 1231–1236. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/33485343

Nord, C. (2023). Basic translation competence: Teaching languages for translation. In O. I. Seel, S. Roiss, & P. Z. Gonzlez (Eds.), *Instrumentalising Foreign Language Pedagogy in Translator and Interpreter Training: Methods, goals and perspectives* (Vol. 161, pp. 12–22). John Benjamins Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.161.01nor

Olalla-Soler, C. (2015). An experimental study into the acquisition of cultural competence in translator training: Research design and methodological issues. *Translation & Interpreting: The International Journal of Translation and Interpreting Research*, *7*(1), 86-110. https://doi.org/ti.106201.2015.a01

Olalla-Soler, C. (2017). An experimental study on the acquisition of cultural competence in translators' training. Results of a pilot study. *Meta*, *62*(2), 435-460. https://doi.org/10.7202/1041032ar

Olalla-Soler, C. (2018a). Using electronic information resources to solve cultural translation problems: Differences between students and professional translators. *Journal of Documentation*, *74*(6), 1293-1317. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-02-2018-0033

Olalla-Soler, C. (2018b). Using translation strategies to solve cultural translation problems. Differences between students and professional translators. *Perspectives*, *27*(3), 367-388. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2018.1549574

Olalla-Soler, C. (2019). Applying internalised source-culture knowledge to solve cultural translation problems. A quasi-experimental study on the translator's acquisition of cultural competence. *Across Languages and Cultures*, *20*(2), 253-273. https://doi.org/10.1556/084.2019.20.2.6

Omar, L. I., & Salih, A. A. (2023). Enhancing translation students' intercultural competence: Affordances of online transnational collaboration. *World Journal of English Language*, *13*(8), 626–637. https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v13n8p626

Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., … Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, 372. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71

Qassem, M. (2021). Translation strategy and procedure analysis: a cultural perspective. *Asia Pacific Translation and Intercultural Studies*, *8*(3), 300-319. https://doi.org/10.1080/23306343.2021.2003511

Qassem, M., & Al Thowaini, B. M. (2023). Bi-directionality in translating culture: Understanding translator trainees' actual and perceived behaviors. *PLoS ONE*, *18*(11), e0293541. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0293541

Solovyova, E. G., Kondrateva, I. G., Pomortseva, N. P., & Sattarova, A. I. (2019). Competence-based and cultural approaches. *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, *10*(4). https://doi.org/10.31901/24566764.2019/10.04.303

Stankic, D. P., & Begonja, H. (2021). Intercultural competences in translation education: A collaborative task-based approach. *Folia Linguistica et Litteraria*, *11*(34), 329–343. https://doi.org/10.31902/FLL.34.2021.18

Tomozeiu, D., Koskinen, K., & D'Arcangelo, A. (2016). Teaching intercultural competence in translator training. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, *10*(3), 251-267. https://doi.org/10.1080/1750399X.2016.1236557

Tomozeiu, D., & Kumpulainen, M. (2016). Operationalising intercultural competence for translation pedagogy. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, *10*(3), 268–284. https://doi.org/10.1080/1750399X.2016.1236558

Vula, E., & Muhaxhiri, G. (2024). Exploring linguistic and cultural barriers in literary translation: An analysis of undergraduate students' strategies and challenges in translating Albanian texts into English. *Sapienza: International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, *5*(4), e24067. https://doi.org/10.51798/sijis.v5i4.864

Vural, H. (2023). How to translate cultural items: A general outlook to strategies. In J. A. Jaworski (Ed.), Advances *in Sociology Research*. Volume 40. Nova Science Publishers. Retrieved from https://novapublishers.com/shop/advances-in-sociology-research-volume-40/

Yarosh, M. (2014). Translator intercultural competence: A model, learning objectives, and level indicators. In D. Tafazoli & M. C. Gómez-Parra (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching Methods in Language Translation and Interpretation* (pp. 160-178). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-6615-3.ch010